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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000451

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AF/SPG, AND
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SUBJECT: DENG ALOR: TWO ROADS FOR U.S. POLICY

REF: KHARTOUM 0290

Classified By: CDA Cameron Hume, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

NCP Chooses Confrontation

11. (C) Minister for Cabinet Affairs Deng Alor told USAID Mission Director and Poloff on March 19 that the National Congress Party (NCP) has decided to confront the international community on Darfur. He admitted that his belief in productive engagement with Khartoum "was getting weaker and weaker." Alor pointed to Bashir's letter to UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon on the UN Heavy Support Package, a recent internal NCP decision not to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the cancellation of a meeting on humanitarian operations in Darfur as evidence of the NCP's confrontational stance.

International Threats Ring Hollow

12. (C) The NCP considers the threats from the international community hollow, said Alor. Hard-line elements in the regime are behaving as if there is no serious threat from the international community, despite the knowledge of imminent U.S. sanctions. They also believe that the USG does not have the will to initiate dramatic action under "Plan B" and that it would not want to "hurt" Southern Sudan. He explained that during internal discussions Presidential Advisor Nafie Ali Nafie argues that the regime has survived sanctions in the past and can do so in the future. Alor claimed that a March 18 meeting of President Bashir, Nafie, Presidential Advisors Maghzoub al-Khalifa and Mustafa Osman Ismail, and others concluded that Sudan would not cooperate with the ICC.

Punitive Measures and the Consequences

13. (C) Alor asserted that anything short of comprehensive oil sanctions or non-permissive military action would not change the NCP's position. He predicted that the "punishment" that oil sanctions or military action would exert on the Sudanese people would "push them into the streets." Commenting on earlier SPLM assessments that the NCP would use these Western actions to justify a state of emergency (reftel), Alor said that popular resistance could nonetheless succeed and that the Sudanese military would divide when it saw the NCP as weak. Alor asserted, however, that the U.S. and Norway would

need to provide total financial support for the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) during the transition because oil revenues from the North would cease. (Note: Alor said that he had also discussed this point with Norwegian Special Representative Vegard Ellefsen on March 18, who said he would raise it in Oslo. End note.) "Things would get much worse before they got better," Alor stated. He said coercive measures could last only six months or the "suffering will be enormous." Alor also explained that the opposition parties had no clear vision for a post-NCP government beyond professing support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Alor said that the SPLM was discussing a number of scenarios in light of the possibility of sanctions but did not elaborate.

One Last Hope

¶4. (C) According to Alor, one diplomatic option may remain: the Government might change its position on a UN peace-keeping mission if Bashir could say that he did so at the behest of the African or Arab "wise men." He suggested that such a decision could come after either South African President Mbeki's upcoming visit to Khartoum or the March 28-29 Arab League summit in Riyadh. Alor said, however, that Mbeki's messages to the NCP on the importance of international engagement "could be clearer" and that Egypt was sending "mixed signals" on the Darfur crisis.

Two Options Only

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¶5. (C) Alor has long contended that sustained international dialogue with the Sudanese government would bear fruit and that the regime would ultimately accept a face-saving solution to the debate over UN peace-keeping forces in Darfur. However, senior SPLM leaders, including Alor, Deputy SPLM Secretary General for the Northern Yasser Arman, and Minister of Trade and Investment Malik Agar, increasingly assert that the USG faces only two policy options: 1) Confront Khartoum's leaders with dramatic, punitive actions that may alter their behavior by virtually forcing the regime to collapse, while anticipating the repercussions of this policy,--including the curtailment of U.S. aid programs and diplomatic engagement in Sudan; or, 2) Recognize that a solution to the Darfur crisis and a change in government in Khartoum will only result from implementation of the CPA--including the gradual development of opposition forces--and a long-term diplomatic strategy involving non-Western partners, while anticipating numerous setbacks.
HUME